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A
LETTER
OF
Advice to a Friend
IN
LONDON:
Written by the
OBSERVATOR
IN THE
COUNTRY.

LONDON,
Printed and Sold by J. How, at the Seven-Stars in Talbot-
Court in Grace-Church-Street, 1704.

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OF
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Court in Grace-Church-Street, 1704.

LETTER

OF

ADVICE, &c.

YOU may expect, my Friend, that I should be,
 Now disinclin'd from Awful Poetry;
 Forc'd to Retreat to Shades, or Country Plains,
 Where nought but Innocence or Virtue Reigns:
 These are, my Friend, too weak by far for Verse,
 And clad in homely Weeds, and Antick Dress;
 Quite out of Fashion in your Impious Town,
 Esteem'd by none but the dull Country Clown:
 Can these inspire a Bard, and make him write
 Lines which at least may Profit and Delight?
 Here's no *Celæstial Nectar* of the Vine,
 To raise the Mind, and make the Fancy shine.

They

Nature

Nature alone has a Dominion here;

Each *Bard* must own her, and her Liv'ry wear;

She is the All in All in every part,

Without the Flourishes of *Wit* or *Art*.

Well then, my Friend, for once I'll strive to show,

What a poor *Rustick Muse* for you can do;

How far the Charms of *Innocence* can prevail,

What Fence they are against the *Courtiers Flail*.

The Banish'd *Ovid*, by *Augustus* sent
Into a curs'd perpetual Banishment;

Some Mournful Letters to his Friends did write,

His *Genius* Cramp'd, and Child'd by *Courtiers* spite.

Whoever Reads em, he must needs declare

They are the Off-spring of a Wanderer:

Who could have thought this very Man before,

Had all *Love's* vast Dominions Travell'd o'er?

Had Humane Forms transform'd to Shapes *Divine*,

And Heroes chang'd in every *pregnant Line*?

On me the angry *Senate* always Frown,

For Crimes, alas! To me as yet unknown:

Whilst Others call them *Beagles*, *Packs* of *Hounds*,

And vilely hunt our *Constitution* down.

They

They plant their *Cannon* 'gainst our Native *Laws*,
 And some Men do too well approve their Cause;
 They 'gainst our *Rights* do Mounds and Sconces raise;
 And not to Censure them, it is to Praise.

But I, who always was a Friend to Truth,
 And hated Villains from my very Youth,
 Ventur'd as far to save our *English* Rights,
 As any He that either Votes or Writes;
 But 'tis my Fault, they say, and 'twill be so,
 That I hate Villains, be they High or Low;
 All petty Thieves that Pilfer, Rob and Steal,
 But much more those that Rob the Common-weal;
 The mighty Plunderers our Treasure share,
 Who Licens'd Robbers and Free-Booters are;
 Who do our *Funds* and *Subsidies* Curtail,
 And more in one Day from the *Publick* Steal,
 Than their mean *Ancestors* with *Toil* and *Cares*,
 Could get with *Honesty* in many Years:
 These, these, my Friend, are from all Harms secure;
 State-Thieves are always Fenc'd with *Force* and *Power*;
 They do with safety Skulk behind the *Laws*,
 By *Interest* prop the Badness of their Cause.

And if the Man that views the *Cumber'd State*,
 Sinking beneath the *Infamy* and *Weight*
 Of *Caterpillars* on its *Fading Boughs*,
 Where nought but *Vile Pernicious Vermin* grows;
 If he the *Hungry Blood-Suckers* behold,
 That fasten to our Nations *Veins of Gold*;
 He must himself in deepest *Silence* hush,
 Or else by *Pow'r*, the *Prating Fool* they'll crush:
 If he Disorders in the State shall find,
 He must not speak, and let you know his Mind;
 His Country Ravish'd by *Imperious Knaves*,
 And Men Employ'd to make the People Slaves;
 Our *Fleets* betray'd, our Nations Walls broke down,
 And all our Force to hasty *Ruin* run;
 The *English Honour*, by our *Shame* Retriev'd;
 He must not seem at all our *Wrongs* Aggriev'd:
 If he but speak, his *Mouth* they'll surely stop,
 And make him stoop to help the *Villains* up,
 Or else in *Curst Revenge* his *Head* they'll lop.
 For *Fate* its *sharpest Darts* reserves for such
 Who think too little, or who speak too much.

Therefore, my Friend, by my Misfortune warn'd,
 Be not for your Dear Country's Good concern'd;

Or

Or else resolve to venture *Life* and *Limb*,
Honour, *Estate*, let Person *Sink* or *Swim*;
 In your Attempt you'll meet with many *Friends*,
 Not for the *Publick Good*, but *Private Ends*;
 They'll push you on; and say you're *Stout* and *Brave*,
 T' Expose the *Fool*, and Curb the *Crafty Knave*;
 For what you do, they'll Chuck you under *Chin*,
 And bid you venture on thro' *Thick* and *Thin*;
 'Till by your *Vertue* their own *Turn* is serv'd,
 And then they care not if you're *Hang'd* or *Starv'd*.
 Few Men there are, who *Vertuous Measures* take,
 And love their *Country* for their *Country's* sake;
 Themselves they Love, are for their own *Defence*,
 And *English Right* is but their bare *Pretence*.
Religion too most grossly is abus'd,
 And only as a *Cloak* for *Interest* us'd.
 To hide the *Devil* would appear a *Saint*,
 And purchase such *Preferments* as they want;
 The *Cant* some *Zealots* do with *Heat Express*,
 Are Baits for *Mammon* of *Unrighteousness*.

Else how of late, could Men so much profuse,
 The Sacred Name of our *Religion* use?

Like

Like *Levites* bellow out the *Church*, the *Church*;
 Who ne'er so much approach the very *Porch*;
 But still declining from the *Temple-Doors*,
 To *Stews* and *Brothels* go, to Worship *Whores*;
 Where in *Adultrous Loves*, they spend the *Nights*,
 At *Taverns* waste the *Day* in vain *Delights*;
 Even there the *Church* is all their *Wise Discourse*,
 They Drink its *Health*, and will maintain its *Force*;
 Its *Health* in *Jolly Bumpers* goes about;
 Then Facing to the *Pot*, they piss it out;
 Thus *Ignorant Devotes* their *God* devour,
 And in their *Bellies* put *Almighty Pow'r*;
 So the *Lewd Priest* performs his *Conjuring Cheat*,
 And every *Blockhead* do's his *Godhead* Eat,
 Which passing thro' the *Regions* of his *Guts*,
 Into some *Bog-House* he the *Idol* puts.

The *High Tantiwys*, the pretended *Lights*,
 That show themselves aloft like *Paper Kites*;
 Like *Corpusants*, they never do appear,
 But when some *Ruin* or *Destruction's* near,
 Or like the *Porpoises* o' th' *Sickly State*
 That do portend vast *Hurricanes* of *Fate*;

Like

Tho'

Tho' they, I say, are Monsters vast and large,
 Should you at them your Gun of *Truth* discharge;
 You'll quickly find it is not worth your while,
 And that it will upon your self Recoil:
 VVere you a *Stentor*, and your Voice would reach
 To distant Shores; and you to Kingdoms Preach;
 Had you such Lungs as *Pelling*, when he rails,
 And Martyr'd *Charles*, from Murdering *Caitiffs* Bails;
 Could you with Charms of *Eloquence* perswade,
 You would by Pow'r, be a meer Blockhead made;
 Against your *Fate* you would no shelter find;
 For *Justice* is grown *Deaf*, as well as *Blind*.

Take then, my Friend, th' *Advice* of one who know,
 How far the Rule of *Truth* and *Justice* goes;
Truth is at best a Dis-improv'd Conceit,
 Ne'er aims at *Actions* that are *High* and *Great*;
 A Cloudy Something still Opprest by *Fate*.
 If you do wide from *Truth*'s Dominions Roam,
 You may in Time to *Wealth* and *Honour* come;
 But if too close you do her Heels pursue,
 She'll backwards Kick, and even Murder you:
 VVhat need you, Sir, the *Angry Goddess* Court,
 VVhen to her Palace there's so small Resort?

The *Weather-beaten-Hag* has lost her *Charms*,
 Long since expir'd in our Forefathers *Arms*;
 To Court the *Granny* that our Parents took,
 Does little better now than *Incest* look;
 Then Beldam *Truth*, with your just Rage Confound,
 Not lay her on the Back, but in the Ground;
 Buried so low, she may no more arise;
 Then for your *Actions* you'll be counted *Wise*.

But above all, if you intend to rise,
 Let not your Conscience squeamish be, and nice;
 Loosen her *Reins*, and teach her how to leap,
 Or else contrive to Lull her fast asleep;
 A waking Conscience will disturb your Rest,
 She's but a *Night-perplexing-Hag* at best:
 Dost think those Heroes, now are Princes Mates,
 VVho sprang like *Musbrooms* unto vast Estates;
 With ravish'd Titles sound from Shore to Shore,
 VVhose Fathers us'd the *Spade* and *Sythe* before?
 Dost think, I say, that these a Conscience bear,
 Or that they make the *Publick Good* their Care?
 No, no, my Friend, they better Methods find;
 They always trim their Sails to Tide and Wind;

Be it to *Flanders, Portugal, or Greece,*
 They every where pursue the *Golden-Fleece*;
 And let the Country Ransack't be and Poor,
 If they are Rich, they never covet more.

One Principle I'd have thee entertain,
 Be thou a *Weather-Cock* in ev'ry Reign;
 Mark well what *Faction* in the Land prevails,
 And as that changes, do thou shift thy Sails;
 Always in State Affairs observe the Wind;
 And weigh in time, or thou'lt be left behind;
 Who think of Ages past, are counted Fools;
 Mind thou the *Faction*, that at present Rules;
 He that in every Reign is still the same,
 VVill purchase neither Ease, nor VVealth, nor Fame;
 Dost see how some that rail'd against the Court,
 And by the Mob were much applauded for't:
 VVho rail'd at *Offices*, as Dens of *Thieves*,
 In which no other thing than Rapine Lives;
 Are now Reform'd, and better Stock'd with Grace,
 And deem't a Venial Sin to have a Place;
 Who heretofore with *Anger* loudly bawl'd,
 And *Offices* by Name of *Brib'ry* call'd;

Be they your Pattern, Sir, their *Arts* are clean;
 Their *Tongues* will never tell you what they mean;

There is another Rule, which I much doubt,
 Will never well with your proud Stomach suit:
 You must be *Humble*, as a *Spaniel-Dog*;
 And if occasion needs, must wear a Clog;
 You'll many Gawdy Blockheads have to please,
 And *Sycophantry* is the Court Disease;
 If you design at any pitch to rise,
 Lay the Foundation of Ten Thousand Lies:
 The greatest *Ninny*, you must own a *Wit*;
 Or else you are not for your *Station fit*.
 If some Court *Madam* be your *Patroness*,
 Your Plague is double, and your Profit less;
 Be she as Ugly as a *Maulkin* is,
 You must applaud her *Beauty* to the Skies;
 Be she a *Fool* (and *Wisdom* seldom Dotes
 Upon those Trifling Things in *Petticoats*)
 Yet must you her *Exalted Parts* Commend,
 And tell her she the *Sybils* does Transcend,
 Be she a *Whore*, as *Lewd* as *Cresnel*, past,
 You must in every place Proclaim her *Chaste*:

In Fine, You must be every thing they please :

This is the shortest way to Offices.

But I, the most unhappy Man alive,
 From Reason's Path could never lead nor drive;
 I never yet an Empty Fop ador'd,
 But *Knaves* and *Fools* in every Reign abhor'd ;
 When-e'er I saw the People's Rights Betray'd,
 To speak my *Mind* I never was afraid ;
 On First-Rate Sinners of a mighty Bulk,
 I ne'er could Fawn, or from their *Anger* sculk ;
 I Crown-Misleaders never yet Rever'd,
 Nor VVhig nor Tory have my Lashes spar'd ;
 For common *Justice* no Distinction makes,
 Nor spares the Sinners for their Sovereign's sakes.
 Sometimes, indeed, the most profuse of *Elves*,
 Into my Flying-Squadron Lift themselves ;
 With Honest Talk they may perhaps deceive,
 And some true Signs of *English* Courage give ;
 But when they March in Wooden-shoes or Brogues,
 I strait Disband, and mark the Perjur'd Rogues :
 These are the Crimes for which I suffer Blame,
 Because in every Reign I am the same.

But now perhaps, you willingly would know,
 How I my Fate of *Exile* undergo;
 Banish't from Friends, and what is worse, from Books,
 Like the Extream of a Misfortune looks:
 But still good, Sir, consider here that I,
 Enjoy my Self and *Native Liberty*;
 He who enjoys the Pleasures of the Mind,
 Can never be in any place confin'd;
 Yet still the Bodies Freedom adds to Thought,
 By Pains without, the Mind's to Thralldom brought.

As the poor *Sparrow* to the Thicket flies,
 And there the *Tallon'd Hawk* in safety eyes;
 So I abandon your *Imperious Town*,
 And am from *Catch-poles*, and from *Harpies* gone;
 Of Warring *Politicks* I have my share,
 I still Entrench, when any Danger's near;
 But when the Enemy's Decamp'd and gone,
 I Cock my Cap, and bluster in the Sun;
 I shall no *Medals* for my Prowess have,
 But those are *Trifles* far beneath the *Brave*.
 Sometimes to show my *Courage*, I do Shoot,
 Small Game, my Friend, rather than I'll stand out;

The little winged People of the Air
 That feed on *Hemp*, which some Men ought to wear.
 At Night I sleep like any *Morpheus* Son,
 And on good *Beef* and *Pudding* Dine at Noon
 These are my Moral Pastimes and Delights,
 And thus I spend the Days, and waste the Nights.
 And now my Friend, I've nothing more to say,
 You shall hear from me, Sir, another Day:
 I Wrote these Lines to give my Mind some Ease,
 And you may put them to what Use you please.

Sic Subscribitur

Observator

*Dated from Middletons Pipes, within
 a Furlong of the New-River, on
 St. Candlemas-Day, otherwise call'd
 by the Astrologers, the Second of
 February, 1704.*

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You shall hear from me, Sir, another Day
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Sic Subscription
Obligator.

Dated from Middletons Place, within
a League of the New River, on
St. Martins Day, otherwise called
by the Poets, the second of
February, 1704.

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